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District of Arizona*

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FUGITIVE ARMS SMUGGLER ORDERED EXTRADITED FROM TUCSON TO FACE PROSECUTION IN MEXICO

PHOENIX - Braulio Eloy Villegas-Borquez, aka Jose Munoz, aka Braulio Eloy Villegas 27, a U.S. Citizen living in Tucson, has been ordered by U.S. Magistrate Judge Glenda E. Edmonds to be extradited to Mexico to face charges there for smuggling arms and munitions into Sonora, Mexico.

Judge Edmonds' September 10th order, based on an extradition hearing on September 5, 2007 in Tucson, cited that Villegas-Borquez drove a vehicle southbound through the Naco, Ariz. port of entry on November 26, 2005. He crossed from Naco, Ariz. into Naco, Sonora, Mexico, in the "nothing to declare" lane. Mexican customs officials in Naco, Sonora searched the trunk of the vehicle and found weapons concealed in containers in the trunk. Included in what they found were two CN-ROMARM CUGIR 7.62 x 39mm caliber rifles, an XM15-E2S 223-5.56mm caliber Bushmaster rifle, a Master Piece Arms 45-caliber automatic machine gun pistol, two 7.62 x 39mm long rifle clips, two 7.62 x 39mm short rifle clips, two 223-caliber rifle clips, two 45-caliber machine gun clips; and 47 Speer 45-caliber live rounds. The weapons and ammunition were later determined to be operational and reserved for exclusive use by the Mexican Army, Navy and Air Force.

Villegas-Borquez was arrested and taken to the custom's headquarters office to be guarded. Villegas-Borquez struck the inspector guarding him and fled. At some point, the authorities heard the sound of a gunshot and saw Villegas-Borquez fleeing and the inspector chasing him. Villegas-Borquez then left in a white Ford pick-up truck that was waiting for him on the street.

Villegas- Borquez has been charged with smuggling firearms and munitions into Mexico, specifically, "smuggling into national territory of firearms and munition reserved for the use of the Mexican Army, Navy, and Air Force." Arms smuggling is an extraditable offense under Article 2, Appendix Item 19, of the Extradition Treaty between the U.S. and Mexico.

The extradition is being handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Christina M. Cabanillas, on behalf of the Mexican government, with the assistance of the U.S. Marshals Service, the Department of Justice's Office of International Affairs and the U.S. Department of State.

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